
SOUTH HAD A DARING NAVY

FEATS OF CONFEDERATE SEA FIGHTERS READ LIKE FICTION.

One Captured Thirty-Eight U. S. Ships
In Eight Months—Dixie Engineers
Developed the Ironclad and
First Successful Submarine.

The Confederate army in size and in accomplishments completely overshadowed the South's little naval establishment, and the feats of the seamen have received tardy recognition at home and elsewhere, except perhaps at the hands of the Geneva tribunal, which awarded damages of 15½ million dollars against Great Britain in connection with the depredations of Confederate cruisers upon United States commerce.

A former superintendent of the U. S. naval records has given the Confederate navy credit for developing ironclads, creating the ironclad ram, creating the best and most effective gun

OF THE WAR, THE BLOODY FIFE, VICTORY and extending the torpedo service, and operating the first successful submarine torpedo boat. It was an army officer, George E. Dixon of the 21st Alabama, though, that commanded the historic little submarine when it finally achieved its ill-fated victory by sinking the U. S. S. Housatonic and going to a watery grave beside it.

Shut off from home ports by a vigilant blockade, without adequate means of communicating with Richmond, and thrown constantly on their own resources, the officers of the Confederate navy upon the high seas were very largely independent of higher authority.

SEMMES A GREAT COMMANDER.

Raphael Semmes, who received the rank of rear admiral in the Confederate navy in recognition of his services aboard the Alabama, captured sixty odd United States vessels and sank one in action, the Hatteras, with that vessel. He captured eighteen others while commanding the Sumter, a converted packet boat. Though commonly referred to about Washington in the '60s as a "pirate," he has come to be recognized as one of the most exact exponents of law that the seas has ever known.

He "never, even in the bitterest time of the Civil war, sank a ship without providing for the safety of its passengers." Theodore Roosevelt said in 1918

in a speech at St. Paul. His uncle, Commander James D. Bulloch, C. S. N., was present at the christening of the Alabama, off the Azores.

But Semmes was more by a good deal than a "sea lawyer." He was an extraordinary seaman, eluding capture by the United States vessels sent in search of him for three years, twice escaping from the island of Martinique, once in the Sumter and later in the Alabama, while superior United States vessels lay outside prepared to sink him when he came out. He was also a wonderful commander. From the day he hoisted the flag of the Sumter to the breezes of the gulf, June 30, 1861, till the flag of the sinking Alabama was hauled down off Cherbourg, June 19, 1864, he never lost a man from disease on either ship.

RUNNING THE BLOCKADE.

The only Confederate flag to receive the salute of a foreign power was the flag of the Confederate cruiser Florida. It was saluted by English guns at St. George, Bermuda Islands, July 16, 1862. The career of the Florida was picturesque. One of the most daring feats of the war is credited to her. In the open daylight on the afternoon of September 4, 1862, she dashed into Mobile Bay, her guns not in commission, her crew short-handed and an epidemic of yellow fever aboard, the guns of the Onelda, the Winona and the Rachel Sea-

man meanwhile playing upon her at close range with heavy shell and shrapnel. For allowing the Florida to break the blockade, Commander H. Preble, of the Onondaga, ranking officer present, was summarily dismissed from the United States navy, but Lincoln five months later reappointed him. The Florida's passage of the blockade was made the subject of an investigation by a naval court of inquiry in 1872, and John Newland Maffitt, late commander of the Florida, was one of the important witnesses called by Preble. Maffitt one of the notable officers in the Confederate navy, was born at sea. His father, a preacher, helped to launch at Nashville the predecessor of the Christian Advocate, the organ of the Southern Methodist church. The son's career in the Confederate navy was full of thrills, his final assignment being as commander of a blockade runner.

A youngster who was assigned to the Florida while it lay in Mobile Bay, being repaired, was Charles W. Keud of Mississippi, then only 22 years of age, but a veteran of the fight with Farragut below New Orleans, and of the dash of the ram Arkansas out of the Yazoo River through Farragut's fleet to the wharf at Vicksburg, July 15, 1862. His cruise up the Atlantic coast in the captured brig Clarence, in the Tacony, another prize, and the Archer, still another prize, to the harbor of Portland, Me.

where he cut out the revenue cutter, Caleb Cushing, only to be captured while getting away with the vessel, was one of the most successful commerce raids that a handful of men (he had but twenty) ever engaged in. Read's raid lasted from May 6, 1863, to June 27, in the course of which he captured twenty vessels, one an ocean liner off New York and another an immigrant ship off Boston, though twenty United States warships and as many more chartered vessels were sent out to capture him. New York City for the moment was even in a state of panic lest the raider attack it. The lad concluded his Confederate naval career by a desperate attempt to take the ram William H. Webb out of the Red River, down the Mississippi and into the Gulf.

FIRED LAST CONFEDERATE GUN.

The final chapter of Confederate history was written by the navy, by the cruiser Shenandoah. James I. Waddell was its commander.

"The Shenandoah," her commander wrote, "was actually cruising after the enemy's property but eight months, during which time she made thirty-eight captures, more than four a month. She released six on bond and destroyed thirty-two.

"She visited every ocean except the Antarctic.

"She was the only vessel which carried the flag around the world and she

from the flag around the world, and she carried it six months after the overthrow of the South.

"She was surrendered to the British nation November 6, 1865. The last gun in defense of the South was fired from her deck June 22, 1865, in the Arctic Ocean.

"She ran a distance of fifty-eight thousand statute miles and met with no serious injury during a cruise of thirteen months.

"She never lost a chase, and was second only to the celebrated Alabama."